

November 2024

Beacon on the Hill

The monthly newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley Vol. 83 #11

The mission of this church is to create loving community; inspire spiritual growth; and encourage lives of integrity, joy, and service.

From the Minister

When I was in my early twenties and the iPhone was just released, I was an early adopter. I remember the thrill of possibility it engendered, the exciting, bubbling feeling of “what if” as I dreamed of all the ways these devices could serve the cause of human connection. Seventeen years later, I think the jury’s still out on whether these devices serve connection or disconnection in greater degree. But there was one element that particularly captured my imagination for religious community. What if, I wondered, the church could be like the app store for social technologies? What if, my 22-year-old self wondered as I began my seminary studies, our congregations were places where people found tools for transformation and shared them with one another?

While I’m less hopeful about the actual app store than I was then, I still think there’s something to the idea of church as a resource for social technologies. What if we developed a restorative justice system so robust within the context of our own community that just through living it with one another we each felt equipped with skills we could use to help transform conflict in our families and workplaces? What if practicing spiritually grounded discernment as a group process, rather than a default orientation toward analytical decision-making, enabled us to be more wise and grounded leaders in other contexts? What if we became so skillful in using tools to dismantle racism and other forms of oppression that we could become a resource to the wider community? Many of us have already had experiences like this at church, like how learning to offer one another deep listening in chalice circles makes us more capable to offer the gift of listening deeply to others in our lives. What social technologies would you like to make available for download here?

If the questions I’ve been raising about restorative justice pique your interest, please plan to stick around for a workshop after the service on November 10th. Rev. Samantha Wilson and I will be sharing some of our work to develop approaches to transforming justice. We plan to invite interested participants to join in a series of classes in the new year for deeper study, with the goal of developing a restorative justice system at UUCB.

With faith in the *what if*,
Rev. Marcus Liefert



November Services

Sundays 11 am

In Person, [Facebook Live](#) and [YouTube](#)

November 3

Even the Coconut Tree (Pre-Election Service)

November 10

Bound Together (Post-Election Service)

November 17

The Web is the Spaces in Between

November 24

Shimmering, Shuddering Convergence

Coffee and Lunch

Sundays after the service

In person in the Social Hall

Sunday Programming

Personal Theology

Sundays at 9:30 am In Person and on Zoom

November 3 – Keeping the Heart Open in Uncertain Times

presented by James Baraz, co-founder of Spirit Rock Meditation Center. In these uncertain times, most of us want what is best for society, and we can easily get caught in worry, fear, anger and despair. Now is when our spiritual practice is needed most. How can we use it to not get caught in "othering," to deepen compassion for those who are motivated by hate, to develop a balance of mind in unpredictable circumstances and to have love be the source of our engagement?

November 17 – What is Enduring UU Identity presented by Rev. Jay Atkinson. Between the election and the onset of the holiday season is a good time to reflect on our vision of ourselves as Unitarian Universalists.

Youth and Children's Choir Rehearsal

Sundays at 10 am

The Choir is open to all children and youth, ages 5 ½ and up. Prior musical experience is not required. We rehearse in the Meditation Room (below the Sanctuary) or on Zoom. We help lead the Sunday worship service once or twice per month. Occasionally we participate in other music events. We'd love to have you join us!

Religious Education

Sundays at 11:15 am (during service)

We will explore our theme for the month: JUSTICE, which means we work for a better world for everyone, and we use our democratic process to make decisions that will guide us to a diverse Beloved Community. Please email Kathryn Jay, Director of Family Ministry for more information: kathryn@uucb.org.

Humanist Connections

Sundays at 1 pm on Zoom (3rd Sunday is in person, no zoom)

November 3 – Topic Selection for June and Short Topic Discussion. Ray Westergard.

Topics for Nov. 10, 17, & 24 will be shared in The Week Ahead.

Special Events

November 3

In Service: New Member Welcome

on the Chancel

5 pm: LGBTQIA+ Potluck

November 5

Election Day (office closed)

November 9 @ 4 pm

Church du Soleil: An XYZ/Millennial-ish service

November 17

The Literature, Film, Drama & Music Contingent of the Social Justice Council hosts a discussion of *Entanglement*. More details pg. 3.

November 28-29

Staff Holiday. Office closed.

Good Neighbor in November

No More Tears

Website: nomoretearssq.com

Mission: No More Tears (NMT) is a violence and crime prevention program founded in 2002 by men incarcerated at San Quentin and concerned citizens both seeking to remedy the rise of violent crime in their communities and reduce the recidivism rate of returning citizens. They recognize the unique perspective of former perpetrators and value their ability to bring solutions to the communities where they once contributed to the problem.

Weekly Events

For up-to-date details: uucb.org/weekahead.

Mondays

9 am Write For Your Life

9:30 am Women's Meditation Group

Tuesdays

10 am Improving Your Balance through Tai Chi

12:15 pm Applied UU Buddhist Sangha

Wednesdays

10 am Walk & Talk Group

10:30 am Aging with Grace

Thursdays

5 pm Javanese Gamelan

7 pm Choir Rehearsal

Fridays

10 am Improving Your Balance through Tai Chi

Monthly Events & Meetings

Sunday

9:30 am Parents Discussion Group (1st & 3rd Sunday)

1 pm WOVS Working to Overcome White Supremacy
(4th Sunday)

Monday

11 am Textile & Art (2nd Monday)

5 pm Climate Justice Committee (4th Monday)

Tuesday

10:15 to 11 am make sandwiches at GRIP (4th Tuesday)

11:15 to 12:45 serve lunch at GRIP (4th Tuesday)

7 pm World Peace Committee (3rd Tuesday)

Wednesday

7:15 pm Board of Trustees (1st Wednesday)

7 pm Social Justice Council (2nd Wednesday)

7 pm Program Council (3rd Wednesday)

Friday

11 am Textile & Art (4th Friday)

Saturday

9 am Work Party (3rd Saturday)

1 pm POCC People of Color Caucus (3rd Saturday)

2 pm Death Café (quarterly)

4 pm Parents' Night Out (3rd Saturday)

6:30 pm Youth Social Event (3rd Saturday)

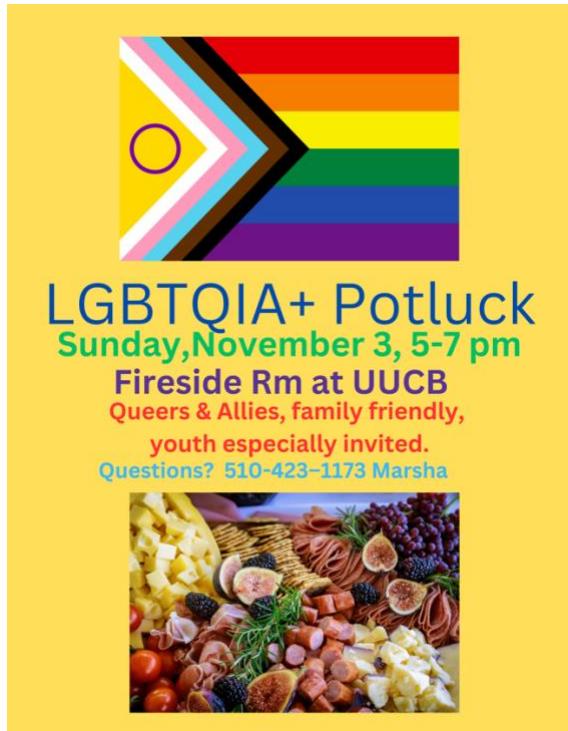
Announcements & Special Events

Board Listening Presence

Michael Armstrong: (510) 219-3847

michaelarmstrong2494@comcast.net

LGBTQIA+ Potluck Nov. 3 from 5-7 pm.



Entanglement Nov. 17 at 1 pm

A SPECIAL, IN PERSON **LFDMC** PRESENTATION SPONSORED BY UUCB'S HONORING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES GROUP (HIP)

Entanglement



Executive Director Notes

Tess Snook O'Riva

A year ago, my husband and life partner, Brian, was diagnosed with gastro-esophageal cancer. The prognosis was not at all good for this type of cancer.

What followed was months of medical treatments, chemotherapy, medications, surgery, care calendars, a Go Fund Me, and friends and relatives coming in from all over. All this while trying to hold myself and my family together, especially with two teenagers facing the biggest uncertainty of their lives. Oh, and I have a full-time job.

That job turned into one of my saving graces. Word got out, and the UUCB community stepped up. You made dinners for my family. You bought groceries and take out. You came to my house and pulled weeds. You came to the office and helped. You even started the Go Fund Me campaign, giving us space to breathe as the unexpected expenses piled up. There were things I never thought about, like how chemo messed up your taste buds and sense of touch, which doubled the food and clothing budgets. I even had space for self-care, like getting a massage!

So, although we aren't "done" with cancer, Brian has had a "complete pathological response" to the treatment, which is as good as we could have hoped for. Still, our lives have been permanently altered, and it will still be some time before we are fully recovered as a family. It will take time to address the things that were put on hold, both personal and professional.

I was extremely gratified that our own James Jackson, Facilities Assistant, put his personal calling on hold until I was back and more settled. James has moved on from UUCB to help people re-entering their communities from incarceration. He will be missed.

This is what it means to have a community. Not just supporting each other when the chips are down but holding space for whatever comes up. I know it's challenging that staff aren't in the office every

day, but us working remotely half the time supports us as people and helps ensure UUCB can retain the quality staff we currently have.

I am so grateful for your understanding, patience, and unwavering support of us all...Your thank-you cards and snacks are always appreciated. Just...thank you.

Social Justice

We started the October meeting of the Social Justice Council with a slide show of the wonderful I'm Gonna Vote photos taken at the Photo Booth in the Social Hall. Rev. Marcus then led us in a discussion of the new Article II values. Questions from SJC led the presentation: What led to this new articulation of UU principles? What does this suggest for justice work at UUCB? Rev. Marcus explained the history of UUA's principles and updates, and what led to the most recent changes. It responds to our new fast and electronic communication environment and a new and greater understanding of the human situation. Rev. Marcus encouraged us to think about a sustained and significant social justice project that could engage the entire congregation and offer many ways for people to participate. He asked, "Given our immediate context, what do our values guide us toward?"

Next month's Social Justice Council meeting will be held November 13 by Zoom.

Cyndy Greenleaf, socialjustice@uucb.org

Good Neighbor

The Social Justice Council's process for selecting our Good Neighbors begins every year in October. All members of the congregation are called upon to nominate their favorite local nonprofits from Alameda and Contra Costa County. This year, the Social Justice Council will accept these nominations until **Sunday, November 3**, and compile a list of qualified applicants. [Here is a link to the nomination form.](#)

On December 11 at 7 pm, all of the nominated organizations will come to a special meeting on Zoom hosted by the Social Justice Council, where representatives from each nonprofit will speak for several minutes about what their organization does, and why UUCB should select them as a Good Neighbor. The Social Justice Council encourages all members of our congregation to attend this meeting. It will also be recorded and sent out on the discuss list for people unable to attend.

UUCB can only select 12 organizations (one for each month of the year), and it is always so difficult to choose, because they all are so deserving! After the meeting, a ballot is sent out to the congregation. **Voting will take place from Wednesday December 11 until Sunday, December 15.**

Natalie Campbell, social justice@uucb.org

Climate Justice Committee (CJC)

This month the CJC will continue to follow up on the successful Climate Justice Revival Workshop we held at the end of September, when we used the innovative and inspiring workshop design developed by UUA Climate Justice Organizer Rachel Myslivy and her team. Our workshop complimented Rev. Marcus' thought-provoking Sunday Climate Justice Revival service and our Voting Justice advocacy hour, both also part of the Climate Justice Revival. UUCB joined 370 congregations, over a third of our denomination across the US, Canada, Mexico, and the Caribbean, in sponsoring a local Climate Justice Revival.

Forty of us came together at the Saturday workshop to imagine a thriving, just world in 2050, with love at the center, that works for all. We can imagine collapse; why not imagine a renewed, just world to create a NorthStar for our climate justice work? After drawing "rich pictures" of our future worlds, we looked at the challenging realities of our communities, possible systems of care to address those realities, and how we might contribute to addressing the realities. We pondered and shared what we love doing, what we have to contribute, and what our communities

need. All this work will feed into the revised Green Sanctuary process to move us towards Green Sanctuary recognition.

Blessings Bags

On October 13th, the youth team of Chloe, Finn, Jemma, Stella and M assembled approximately 50 Blessings Bags for our first ASSEMBLE this fiscal year. Thanks to our UUCB members who have donated items, the bags contained essentials such as water, socks (2 pairs), snacks, and toiletries. At one of our earlier sessions we discussed the fact that there are students in this area who are unhoused. Today, the majority of the bags went to Berkeley School District to be distributed among those students who are unhoused.



Voting Justice

We continued our joyful warrior work to Get Out The Vote with gatherings at UUCB three Saturdays in October to decorate, sort, stamp, and write postcards. We are so pleased to report that the Voting Justice effort has resulted in over 5,000 postcards going to citizens of color in states where they face difficulties exercising their right to vote.

Equity in Berkeley Schools

Education benefits every one of us, regardless of how far removed we may be from our school days. Please stop by the Social Justice Council table in

the Atrium and learn how you can help, even on a one-time basis, as a “School Support Volunteer.”

Now that teacher requests are published, UUCBers have begun volunteering to help as “Classroom Volunteers” throughout the district. Recently, the volunteer coordinator has let us know that volunteers are especially appreciated in the math programs at Cragmont Elementary School.

Helen Toy and Lonnie Moseley,
socialjustice@uucb.org

GRIP Coat Drive

In November and December, we collect warm clothing for our community partner GRIP, the Greater Richmond Interfaith Program. There will be collections receptacles in the Atrium for new and gently used warm clothing much needed by family shelter residents and the unhoused who avail themselves of GRIP's services. In particular need this time of year are coats, jackets, sweaters, sleeping bags, blankets, hats, and warm socks in all sizes. Please contact Katherine Hanway for more information at kat.hanway.home@gmail.com or catch her after the worship service.

GRIP provides a safe and nourishing place that helps transform those who are unsheltered and in need move toward self-sufficiency. GRIP runs a family shelter and a soup kitchen that provides noontime meals daily to anyone who shows up. GRIP's Resource Center provides shower, mail, and laundry services. Their CARE Center services include case management, identification card replacement, social security card and birth certificate replacement, assistance, benefit enrollment, shelter placement, housing navigation, mental health services and more. These services assist 15,000 homeless, hungry, and low-income people annually.

Thank you for your continued support of our service partner GRIP and those most in need.

Freestone Oversight Committee

The Freestone Oversight Committee (FOC) is comprised of Beth Pollard (Board Rep and Co-chair), Tom Tripp (Co-chair), David Wemmer (Freestone Committee Rep), Bob Moore (Freestone Committee Rep), Susan Lankford, and Larry Nagel. The FOC activity for September-October, 2024 included providing oversight for the following:

- The Freestone Committee continues to pursue drilling another well on Lot 1, hopefully with the result of finding water. A new subterrain groundwater survey was performed by the geologist who has been working on the project, and the survey yielded a Category B (2-6 gal per minute) location, as opposed to the six other subterrain groundwater survey locations with a Category A rating (potentially 0-3 gals per minute). The new site is further from the road and will require some grading to access the site with the drilling apparatus. This grading is in progress, and when completed, the new well will be drilled, with planned completion in November. The cost of drilling the new well is being funded by a donation from an “angel.”
- Lots 1 and 2 are still listed for sale, although currently with inactive status pending completion of well drilling and hopefully finding water.
- The first milestone in the Freestone Congregational Resolution is approaching rapidly. By December 1, 2024, the Freestone Committee is required to raise a minimum of \$250,000 to fund repairs at the Freestone property. Hopefully, this money will be raised from the sale of Lots 1 and 2. The Freestone Committee is also exploring the possibility of obtaining a grant to help fund the dome repairs or road improvement, and is considering canvassing “angel donors” who might be willing to make additional contributions.

If you have any questions, please e-mail us at FOC@UUCB.org.

Partner Church

We hope that you attended our Personal Theology presentation on October 27. And did you see the October 13 service with Rev. Kevin Mann and music arranged by Evelie Delfino Såles Posch? The music was amazing. "RevKev" also showed that he's an amazing minister. Here's the information on Regional Global U/U Partnerships that Rev. Kevin spoke about:



Rev. Kevin's goal is to use the regional model to build partnerships between Bay Area UU churches and UU congregations in the Philippines. The regional model would also be used for travel arrangements, money transfers, etc. so that individual congregations can more easily focus on deepening their partnerships in Transylvania and elsewhere.

It's a brave new world, and we're happy that Rev. Kevin is on board to help us navigate a new way forward. Do you have ideas or thoughts about this initiative? Feel free to speak with Stephanie Ann Blythe at steph62850@yahoo.com or Anne Greenwood at annegt1@sbcglobal.net about your concerns.

Hospitality and Fundraising

Thanksgiving: Want to help make a Thanksgiving Day worship service and potluck feast happen? Email me or talk to me.

Help and donations wanted for our annual Holiday Fair! This year let's go back to having a silent auction component. To be a success, the auction should include some events hosted by UUCB members. It can also include objects or groups of objects (e.g. a theme basket) valued at \$25 or more. There will also be a sale on Sunday, December 1, 10 am to 2 pm, of holiday decorations and giftable items including jewelry, small art works and crafts. Donations for the sale would be best brought in the previous Sunday, November 24. (We have plenty of jewelry already in stock!)

For auction items, please fill out the form [here](#) or on the table outside the church office. Ideas for events you could host, alone or with partners, any time in 2025, include a theme dinner, brunch or afternoon tea; game night; music performance or talk or demonstration with light refreshments; behind-the-scenes tour; etc. These events not only raise money, they build community! People have also over the years offered babysitting, yard work, computer tutoring, and other services.

Since December 1 is part of the Thanksgiving weekend, the silent auction will continue on December 8. Some of the other merchandise may also reappear that day or for the Messiah Sing Along on December 7.

Let me know if you're available to help with any of this, or if you have questions.

And, once again: Can you spare an hour or two now and then to help in the kitchen with **Sunday lunch**? Sign up [here](#) or let me know.

Ann Harlow, annharlow77@gmail.com

Unitarian Universalist Church of Berkeley

Covenant of Right Relations

We covenant to build a religious community guided by love and sustained by respectful relationships. Believing that building healthy relationships is a spiritual practice, we aim to listen appreciatively, speak with care, express gratitude, honor our differences, and assume good intentions. We endeavor to communicate directly, honestly, and compassionately, particularly when we are in conflict. When we hurt one another, we will try to forgive, make amends and reconnect in a spirit of love. In celebration of the common purpose that unites us, we will do our best to abide by this covenant.

MEMBERSHIP in this Unitarian Universalist congregation is open to all who see this church as their religious home and the principles for which the church stands as their own. People who wish to join participate in an “introduction to membership” session, sign the membership book, and commit to supporting this church through participation and financially. To become a member, please contact membership@uucb.org.

NEWSLETTER ITEM SUBMISSIONS: Submit announcements and articles by email to beacon@uucb.org. Due to limited space, we do not publish announcements for events occurring outside the church community. **The deadline for submissions** is the 15th of the month. **Questions?** Please email beacon@uucb.org. (Beacon is compiled and edited by Charis Domador.)

WEBSITE: <http://uucb.org>

PHONE: 510-525-0302

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS:

To subscribe to the email version of this newsletter or “The Week Ahead at UUCB,” email connections@uucb.org. You can also find both newsletters at the website under “News.”

UUCB general discussion list:

http://groups.google.com/group/uucb_discuss/about

Email list for families: Email family.ministry@uucb.org **Our Board of Trustees Widening the Circle Vision Statement:**

We, the trustees of UUCB commit ourselves to championing racial justice, embodying anti-racist practices, and confronting and dismantling white supremacy culture and all forms of oppression (including but not limited to racism, sexism, ableism, homophobia, transphobia, classism, ageism, xenophobia and religious oppression, including anti-Semitism and Islamophobia) in everything we do.

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Staff (partial list)

Minister: Rev. Marcus Liefert
revmarcus@uucb.org 510-525-0302 ext. 303
Executive Director: Tess Snook O’Riva
ed@uucb.org 510-525-0302 ext. 305
Director of Family Ministry: Kathryn Jay
kathryn@uucb.org 510-525-0302 ext. 307
Office Administrator: Janae Heard
janae@uucb.org, 510-525-0302 ext. 306
Connections Coordinator: Charis Domador
connections@uucb.org, 510-525-0302 ext. 304

